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## Briefing En Route Paris, France

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

En Route Paris, France

July 12, 2006

**SECRETARY RICE:** All right. I'll just take your questions because we're going to run out of time here.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** Thank you. Madame Secretary, you and the President have often said that the world is a better and safer place without Saddam Hussein. Can we not say the same thing about Kim Jong-il and maybe even the clerics in Iran that it would be a better and safer place without them? And how do you explain the difference to the American people?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, the world will certainly be better when the people of all these countries, including North Korea and Iran, are able to express themselves in a democratically governed state that does not engage in terrorism and that doesn't seek either nuclear weapons or nuclear weapons technology leading to a nuclear weapon. So certainly the world will be better.

The fact is that Iraq is a special circumstance and you have to treat each case on its own merits. And in the case of Iraq, we were talking about a suspended state of war because we had been to war with Iraq 12 years ago. They had violated a series of UN Security Council resolutions. They had used weapons of mass destruction on their own people and in the region. They were continuing to aggressively challenge American forces as we tried to protect the region. So after the final resolution to give Saddam Hussein an opportunity to demonstrate that he was complying with his obligations, and when he didn't it was time for the credibility in the Security Council, credibility of the world, in order not to have the Iraqi people suffering under punitive sanctions that were doing very little to harm the regime, it was time to deal with that problem by military force.

But not every problem is dealt with in that way. And I think in both the cases of North Korea and now Iran, where we're going to Paris to discuss that case, what we've done is to rather patiently and consistently build a regional and/or international coalition to demonstrate to those states that they are only buying isolation by their behavior. So

in international politics you have to have consistent principles, but the consistent application of those principles may not lead you to the same tactics.

**QUESTION:** You've talked about the credibility of the Security Council in the Iran context as well. In your view, is that where this is most likely headed if, as it appears, Iran isn't going to give you the answer you asked for this week?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Obviously that's what we're going to determine this afternoon in the meeting and I want to wait to hear from Javier Solana firsthand about how he sees the situation. But certainly the indications are that Iran's response has been disappointing and incomplete. If that is indeed the case, we've always said that we were either on the path of negotiation or we're on the path to the Security Council. And the Vienna agreement is quite clear about this. Margaret Beckett was very clear about this when she outlined the Vienna agreement. And so we'll listen to Javier Solana, and if in fact we're not on the path of negotiations, if Iran -- Iranians have decided not to take that path, then we will have no choice but to return to the Security Council.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, you were at the Security Council. You accepted to present to Iran an offer because you didn't have the support of Moscow and Beijing to sanctions. You accepted to present to Iran an offer of incentives because you didn't have the support of Moscow and Beijing to sanctions. You even proposed direct talks to them. Now that you have an incomplete and unsatisfying answer, do you think you have won the support of Russia and China?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, let's go through where we've been, because I would not characterize where we are now in exactly that way, Sylvie, so let me explain. It won't surprise you.

We started out in a situation 18 months ago or so where there was no international coalition about what to do about Iran. In fact, if anything during the trip that I took to Europe, I think it demonstrated that we and our allies were either not on the same page or perceived to be not on the same page.

We pulled together with the European 3, backed their negotiations with concrete steps by the United States, moved on then to solidify what was now an EU-3/U.S. consensus about what to do about Iran, moved through a series of IAEA Board of Governors steps culminating in a September resolution which in effect said that they were in noncompliance, a November meeting of the five -- of the six which referred it to the Security Council, and then having it in the Security Council after the Board of Governors resolution -- I'm sorry, the November, setting up the referral and then the referral taking place in February.

That allowed then the six to step back and to say, all right, we wanted to develop two clear paths here. This is what really came out of New York. Those two clear paths are: give the Iranians a really good offer so that they cannot say to the world and to their people that you're trying to deny them civil nuclear power or you are trying to weaken Iran, which has been the Iranian argument particularly to their own people. I think this proposal knocks down any notion that Iran did not have a reasonable alternative to continuing its current program in contravention of the international consensus and the Board of Governors resolution and the presidential statement in the Security Council.

On the other hand we said if they don't accept that offer, then we know that they are closing off the road of negotiations. We need to know whether negotiations are going to work. If they close that off, then we will turn to the Security Council.

So that rather patient set of steps has gotten us to now.

What we have been able to do is to test whether the Iranians simply wanted a good path for negotiation or whether they're determined to defy the international community and move forward with a program that the Board of Governors and the international community find unacceptable.

Apparently, and I just want to say apparently, they have decided that they want to move ahead with a program that is unacceptable to the international community. That then means that we would be on the path of the Security Council.

So at each stage this consensus has been growing, from the EU-3 and the U.S. to the Russians and the Chinese joining that consensus, the Russians actually voting yes on the Board of Governors resolution, the entire international community represented by the Security Council voting yes on the presidential statement. And now we will see where we are tonight.

But the question of sanctions and what they should look like, we've gone through an extensive discussion of what might be available to us; and if in fact we go to the Security Council, we'll take our time in terms of putting together the best response from the Security Council in order to get the Iranians to reconsider their ways, because negotiation is still the best path and negotiation is still open. But when we go to the Security Council, I think the first thing is to make sure that the Iranians understand that the world considers a suspension to be mandatory, not voluntary, not just the presidential statement said it, but mandatory. And then we'll see. If the Iranians can't comply with that, then we'll see what else comes. So we're going to take our time to construct a set of responses that make clear to the Iranians what they are facing.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, you seem to be indicating when you say "take our time" that there's still time for the Iranians to come back with a positive response. There's still a couple, maybe, weeks or months left. At what point do you think we've reached the point of no return?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thanks, Elaine (ph), because I didn't intend to imply that there's still time in terms of going to the Security Council. But even if we are in the Security Council and the Iranians want to get off the track of the Security Council, of course the track of negotiation would always be there. But I think it's been pretty clear in the statements of the P-5+1, the statement of the G-8, that the time for Iran to give a clear indication that we're on the path of negotiation, not on the path of the Security Council, that time has come. And the indications are that decision is before us tonight in terms of which path we're on.

**QUESTION:** I think the way you've been phrasing it becomes clearer and clearer, but I just want to make doubly sure. When you say if they've rejected talks we have no choice but to return to the Security Council, are you saying that's the decision today; that at the end of tonight, if nothing happens that changes your mind, then we are definitely going to the Security Council?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Saul, I want again to hear from Javier Solana in considerable detail what he heard. I want to have a chance to discuss that with the members of the P-5+1. So I'm not going to try and prejudge that meeting. That would not be fair to any of us who are going to have that discussion tonight.

But I'm just laying out what the implications would be of different outcomes tonight. The implications have to lead one way or the other. That was the purpose really of the G-8 statement: that we now are in place where we have to have one path or the other. We've been going with two paths before us and hoping that the Iranians would choose the path of negotiation. But what we really have to know tonight is -- and we have to make a decision on tonight is -- which one are we on. And if we indeed have not received -- as I said the indications are but I want to hear fully -- if we've not received an answer from the Iranians that, yes, we're on the path of negotiation, then I think it's going to be pretty clear by process of elimination that we're on the path of the Security Council.

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